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## HEINRICH EWALD AND THE OLD TESTAMENT.

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By JOHN M. P. SMITH,  
The University of Chicago.

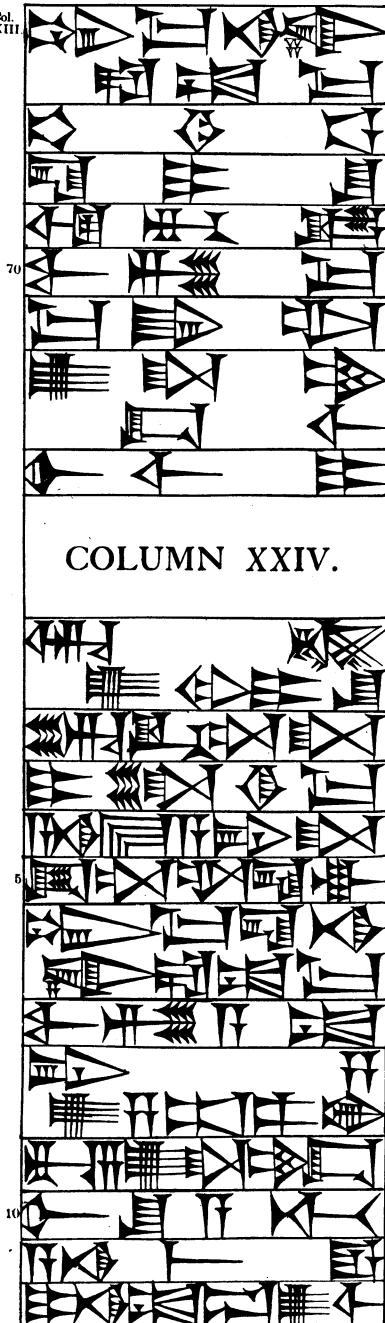
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RECOGNITION may fittingly be made of the one-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Professor Heinrich Ewald, whose services to biblical learning have been unsurpassed. He lived to be seventy-two years old, dying in 1875, and he continued his work without interruption to the last.

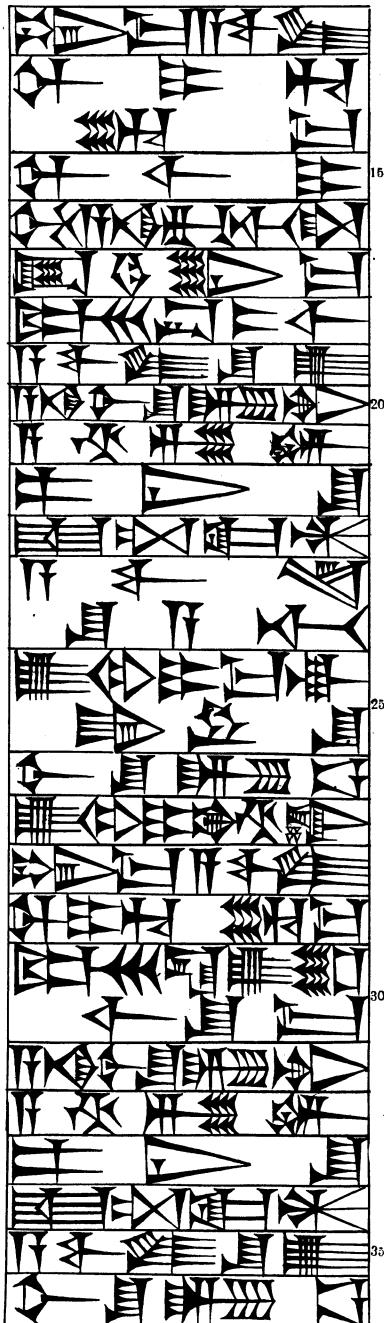
Ewald was born on November 16, 1803, at Göttingen,<sup>1</sup> the seat of the University with which his whole life was closely connected. His father was a linen-weaver and was able to afford this son good educational opportunities. When only eleven and a half years old, the exceptional ability of the lad was observed by the university professors, and every encouragement was given to provide him with the best possible training. His preparatory instruction was secured at the Göttingen *Gymnasium*, and in 1820 he matriculated at the University of Göttingen, whence he received the doctor's degree in 1823 at the age of nineteen. The next fifteen months were spent teaching in the Wolfenbüttel *Gymnasium*. While here he published his first book, *The Composition of Genesis*, written while he was still a student at the University, and intended to demonstrate the unity of Genesis as over against the theories of documentary analysis. This position, after further study and with the growth of his own critical ability, he was soon constrained to abandon. His leisure at Wolfenbüttel was given to copying the Arabic manuscripts contained in the library. At the suggestion of Eichhorn, his former teacher, he was called to Göttingen as tutor in oriental languages; in 1827 he was appointed assistant professor, and professor in 1831;

<sup>1</sup> The facts of Ewald's life, as referred to in this article, and the illustrations here used, have been drawn in large part from the excellent life of Ewald, just published by PROFESSOR T. WITTON DAVIES, *Heinrich Ewald, Orientalist and Theologian, 1803-1903: A Centenary Appreciation*. (London: J. F. Unwin, 1903.)

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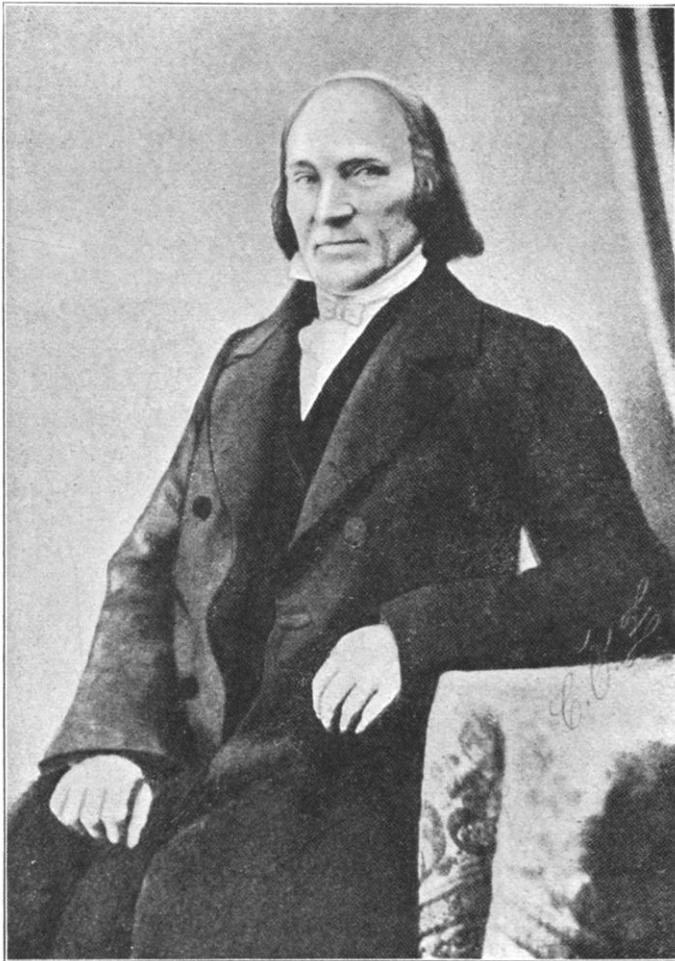
FROM ROBERT FRANCIS HARPER'S CODE OF HAMMURABI.

upon the death of Eichhorn in 1833, Ewald became his recognized successor. Here he continued till 1837.

These first years at Göttingen were a period of incessant literary activity on Ewald's part. He published works on Arabic meters, Sanskrit meters, Arabic grammar, Hebrew grammar; commentaries on the Song of Songs, the book of Revelation, and the poetical books of the Old Testament (four volumes); and an edition of an Arabic text, besides many articles and reviews. While accomplishing all this, he was carrying on his regular duties as professor in the university, lecturing fifteen hours a week on Old Testament, Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, and Sanskrit. His capacity for work and his devotion to it were extraordinary. This indefatigable activity continued to the end of his days. The late Friedrich Max Müller, whose guest he was at Oxford when he was about sixty, spoke of Ewald as the only man of his acquaintance who, "after copying Hebrew manuscripts for twelve hours at the Bodleian, with nothing but a sandwich to sustain him, complained of the short time allowed there for work."

In 1837 there came a storm which uprooted Ewald from his native soil. The new king of Hanover arbitrarily abrogated the liberal constitution under which the state had been ruled since 1833, and proposed to restore the old order of things. Ewald, with six other professors of the University of Göttingen, sent in a vigorous protest. The king immediately dismissed them from the university and banished them from the kingdom of Hanover. This was the beginning of troubles for Ewald; from this time on his life was never free from dissensions and controversies, political, theological, and personal. Almost immediately upon his dismissal from Göttingen he was called to the chair of oriental philology at Tübingen, where he spent the next ten years, a colleague of Ferdinand C. Baur. The chief literary products of this period of his life were: *The Prophets of the Old Testament*; *On the Origin and Nature of the Hebrew Feasts*; *Introductory Hebrew Grammar*; *History of the People of Israel* (first three volumes); and the fifth edition of his *Hebrew Grammar*. These were years of great spiritual discomfort for Ewald; the environment was uncongenial;

he was in constant conflict with (1) the Roman Catholic element in the university; (2) Baur and the followers of his critical methods; and (3) the defenders of the traditional views concern-



PROFESSOR HEINRICH EWALD, 1803-1875

ing the Scriptures. Moreover, he was filled with an unquenchable longing for his native land. Consequently when an invitation to return to Göttingen was made to him in 1847, after the liberal constitution had been restored by the king, he accepted it joyfully, and in 1848 resumed work at his old university.

During these last years at the University of Göttingen he edited and contributed almost all the material for twelve volumes of the *Jahrbücher der biblischen Wissenschaft*, wrote commentaries on the synoptic gospels, Paul's epistles, the gospel and epistles of John, and the Apocalypse; besides treatises on Phoenician, Ethiopic, and Coptic subjects, chiefly grammatical; and the last four volumes of his *History of Israel*.

In 1866 he again came into conflict with the government. Hanover was at this time annexed to Prussia, and an oath of allegiance to the king of Prussia was required of all the officials of the kingdom of Hanover. Ewald alone of the university professors refused to take the oath, and was consequently deprived of the right to teach in any Prussian university, though in recognition of his past services his salary was continued. Three years later, on account of some statements made by him in a political pamphlet, he was prosecuted for high treason and was imprisoned for three weeks.

The remaining years up to his death in 1875 were devoted to literary work and to the service of his country in the Prussian parliament, where he seems to have made himself ridiculous by his passionate and one-sided devotion to the interests of Hanover. These last years saw the issue of further works on the New Testament, new editions of several earlier books, and his *Theology of the Old and New Testament*.

Ewald's life was made turbulent also by the controversies with his fellow-workers in Semitics. Among the latter his most bitter discussions were with Gesenius, the eminent Hebrew grammarian; Freytag, the great Arabic scholar; Lee, the English Arabist and Hebraist; and Hupfeld, the successor of Gesenius. The bitterness that characterized these controversies was due in large part to Ewald's conviction that he was set for the defense of the truth, his inability to admit that he himself could possibly have erred in his interpretation of facts, and his apparent feeling that any departure from the truth, as he himself conceived of it, was occasioned by fundamental moral obliquity. Ewald was entirely independent in the formation of his opinions, paying little or no attention to the work of his predecessors and

contemporaries, and was intolerant of criticism or contradiction. His devotion to his own convictions was superb, and attended with the highest degree of self-sacrifice and unworldliness. He was ready to pit himself against the whole world in maintenance



EWALD'S HOUSE IN GÖTTINGEN.

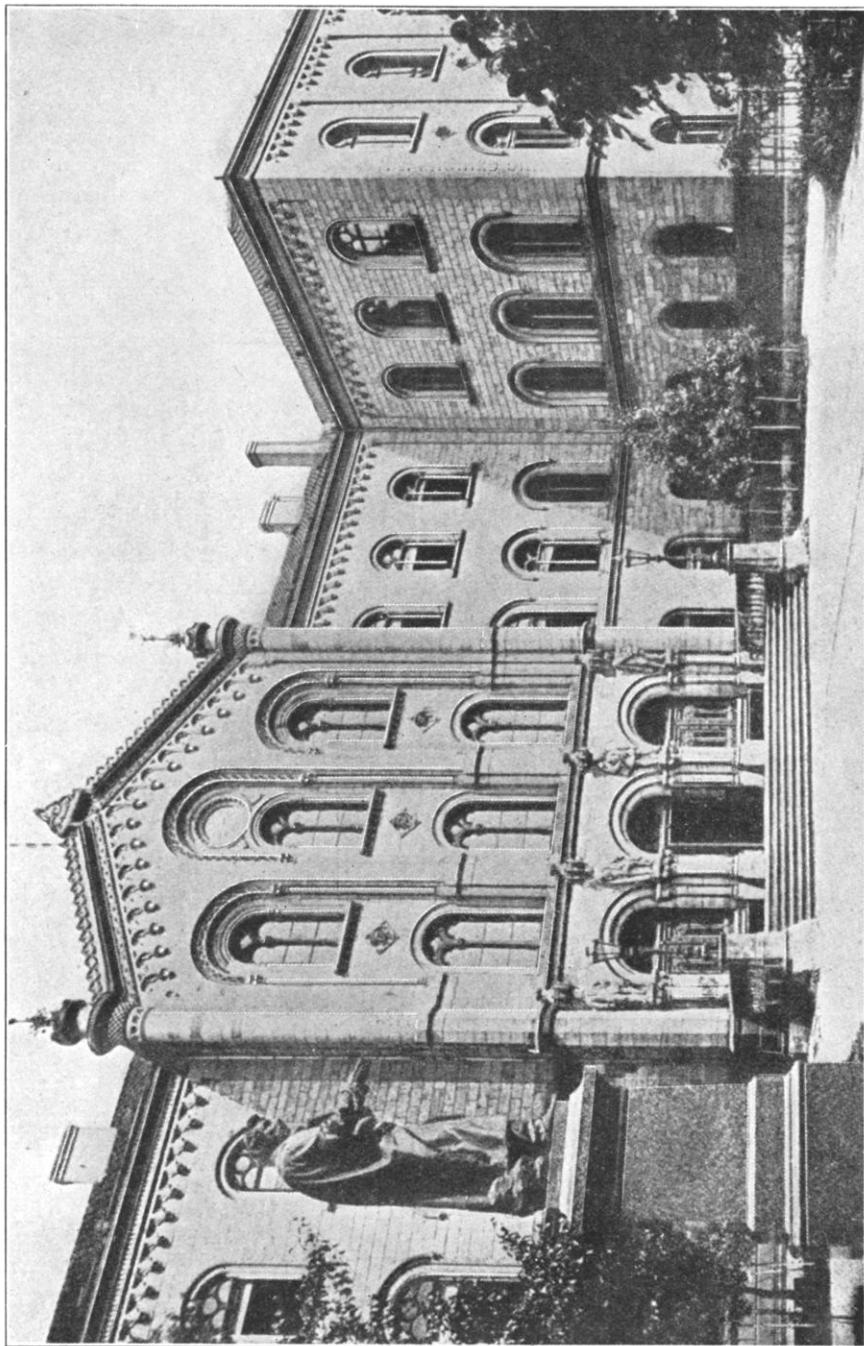
The house is No. 25 Untere Maschstrasse; his library and study were on the third floor; it was in this house that he died on May 4, 1875.

of his principles, and demonstrated his fidelity to them in 1837 and in 1866, at the cost of losing his position; also in 1856, when he alone of the professors of Göttingen opposed the high-handed policy of the Hanoverian government; and again in his opposition to the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia. He was a man of unimpeachable integrity; neither promises nor

threats could induce him to swerve a hair's breadth from the line of duty or to compromise with his conceptions of truth.

As a teacher students flocked to Ewald from all quarters; he was the chief attraction at Göttingen. One of the elements of his strength was his encyclopedic knowledge. Though not the equal of some of his contemporaries in special departments of knowledge, he possessed an unrivaled comprehension of the field of oriental science as a whole; and while his chief interest was in biblical studies, he made the whole realm of his comprehensive knowledge contribute to the enrichment of his interpretation of Scripture. Coupled with this wide range of knowledge was his great power of generalization. He did not make the mistake of frittering away his time and strength upon a multitude of details, nor of overwhelming his students with a flood of minutiae in which they would have been hopelessly lost. He possessed the ability and wisdom to discover and emphasize fundamental principles which might serve as guides through the labyrinth of details. Furthermore, his sincerity and enthusiasm were contagious; no teacher of the nineteenth century ever surpassed him in the capacity to impart inspiration and stimulus to his students. The list of these students is in itself a striking testimony to the greatness of the teacher. Among them were men whose names later became household words with the devotees of oriental science, *e. g.*, Nöldeke, still the highest authority in Syriac, and a Semitic philologist of rare ability; Dillmann, whose name is inseparably connected with Hexateuchal criticism, whose commentaries are models of learning and interpretative insight, and who was also an Ethiopic scholar of the first rank; Hitzig, a keen and scholarly interpreter of the Old Testament, though somewhat erratic and whimsical, and controlled by a rationalistic bias; Schrader, the father of Assyriology; and Wellhausen, the great exponent of the modern development hypothesis of the law and religion of Israel, and a valuable contributor to the furtherance of our knowledge of Arabic history and religion.

Among Ewald's writings probably the most generally known is the *History of Israel*, which, though now somewhat antiquated



MAIN BUILDING OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GÖTTINGEN.

on account of the rapid advance of historical criticism since his day, was a work of the highest value and significance at the time of its publication. Concerning it Cheyne wrote in 1892:<sup>2</sup>

On two grounds this work is fitly described as epoch-making. It is in the highest degree original, every line exhibits a fresh and independent mind, and

mature and long-tested research. It is also, if you will allow the expression, in a scarcely less degree unoriginal. In spite of many ideas which are the sole property of the author, it sums up to a considerable extent the investigations of a century, and closes provisionally that great movement which, beginning as it did with Lowth, ought to have been throughout Anglo-continental.

This work was the product of the thought of thirty years of Ewald's life, and was probably looked upon by him as his master-piece.

His most enduring work, however, as Wellhausen has said, was in the field of Hebrew grammar. He for the first time



EWALD'S GRAVE IN THE FRIEDHOF AT GÖTTINGEN.

The memorial tablet was erected by his pupils, and the medallion was given by Dean Stanley, whose *History of the Jewish Church* was a popularization of Ewald's great *History of Israel*.

emphasized the need of a comparative study of all the Semitic dialects in order to a better understanding of the nature of Hebrew. He dealt with principles, while other men were content to stop with phenomena; his attempt was to get at the spirit

<sup>2</sup> *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, p. 104.

and essence of the language. He has been called the "creator of Hebrew syntax." His most important single contribution to the science of Hebrew grammar was the view of the nature of the so-called tense in Hebrew which is now adopted by practically all grammarians.

Ewald was on the whole the greatest Old Testament scholar of the nineteenth century, and his influence through his students and his publications upon the development of Old Testament science has been of incalculable value.



MADONNA AND CHILD.  
—*Bodenhausen.*